

Troilus and Cressida.

In ranke *Achilles*, must or now be crop,
Or shedding breed a Nursery of like euil
To ouer-bulke vs all.
Nest. Wel, and how?
Ulys. This challenge that the gallant *Hector* sends,
Howeuer it is spred in general name,
Relates in purpose onely to *Achilles*.
Nest. The purpose is perspicuous euen as substance,
Whoe grossest little charraeters summe vp,
And in the publication make no straine,
But that *Achilles*, were his braine as barren
As bankes of *Lybia*, though (*Apollo* knowes)
'Tis dry enough, wil with great speede of iudgement,
I, with celerity, finde *Hectors* purpose
Pointing on him.
Ulys. And wake him to the answer, thinke you?
Nest. Yes, 'tis most meet; who may you else oppose
That can from *Hector* bring his Honor off,
If not *Achilles*; though't be a sportfull Combate,
Yet in this triall, much opinion dwels.
For heere the *Troyans* taste our deer't repute
With their fin't Pallate: and trust to me *Vlysses*,
Our imputation shall be oddly poiz'd
In this wilde action. For the successe
(Although particular) shall giue a scantling
Of good or bad, vnto the Generall:
And in such Indexes, although small prickes
To their subseque't Volumes, there is seene
The baby figure of the Gyant-masse
Of things to come at large. It is suppos'd,
He that meets *Hector*, issues from our choise;
And choise being mutuell acte of all our ioules,
Makes Merit her election, and doth boyle
As 'twere, from forth vs all: a man distill'd
Out of our Vertues; who miscarrying,
What heart from hence receyues the conqu'ring part
To steale a strong opinion to themselves,
Which entertain'd, Limbes are in his instruments,
In no lesse working, then are Swords and Bowes
Directiue by the Limbes.
Vlyss. Giue pardon to my speech:
Therefore 'tis meet, *Achilles* meet not *Hector*:
Let vs (like Merchants) shew our fowlest Wares,
And thinke perchance they'll sell: If not,
The luster of the better yet to shew,
Shall shew the better. Do not consent,
That euer *Hector* and *Achilles* mee'te:
For both our Honour, and our Shame in this,
Are dogg'd with two strange Followers.
Nest. I see them not with my old eies: what are they?
Vlyss. What glory our *Achilles* shares from *Hector*,
(Were he not proud) we all should weare with him:
But he already is too insolent,
And we were better parch in Affricke Sunne,
Then in the pride and salt scorne of his eyes
Should he scape *Hector* faire. If he were foyld,
Why then we did our maine opinion crush
In taint of our best man. No, make a Lottry,
And by device let blockish *Ajax* draw
The sort to fight with *Hector*: Among our selues,
Giue him allowance as the worthier man,
For that will physicke the great Myrmidon
Who broyles in lowd applause, and make him fall
His Crest, that prouder then blew Iris bends.
If the dull brainlesse *Ajax* come late off,
Wee'l dresse him vp in voyces: if he faile,

Yet go we vnder our opinion still,
That we haue better men. But hit or misse,
Our proiects life this shape of sence assumes,
Ajax imploy'd, pluckes downe *Achilles* Plumes.
Nest. Now *Vlysses*, I begin to rellish thy aduice,
And I wil giue a taste of it forthwith
To *Agamemnon*, go we to him straight:
Two Curses shal came each other. Pride alone
Must tarre the Mastiffes on, as 'twere their bone. *Exeunt*
Enter Ajax, and Therites.
Aia. Therites?
Ther. *Agamemnon*, how if he had Biles (ful) all ouer
generally.
Aia. Therites?
Ther. And those Byles did runne, say so; did not the
General run, were not that a botchy core?
Aia. Dogge.
Ther. Then there would come some matter from him:
I see none now.
Aia. Thou Bitch-Wolfes-Sonne, canst thou not heare?
Feele then. *Strikes him.*
Ther. The plague of Greece vpon thee thou Mungrel
beefe-witted Lord.
Aia. Speake then you whinid't leauen speake, I will
beate thee into hand somnesse.
Ther. I shal sooner rayle thee into wit and holinesse:
but I thinke thy Horse wil sooner con an Oration, then
learn a prayer without booke: Thou canst strike, canst
thou? A red Murren o'th thy lades trickes.
Aia. Toads stoole, learne me the Proclamation.
Ther. Doeft thou thinke I haue no sence thou strik'st
Aia. The Proclamation. *(methus?)*
Ther. Thou art proclaim'd a foole, I thinke.
Aia. Do not Porpentine, do not; my fingers itch.
Ther. I would thou didst itch from head to foot, and
I had the scratching of thee, I would make thee the loth-
som'st scab in Greece.
Aia. I say the Proclamation.
Ther. Thou grumblest & raillest euery houre on *A-*
chilles, and thou art as ful of enuy at his greatnes, as *Cer-*
berus is at *Proserpina's* beauty. I, that thou barkst at him.
Aia. Mistresse Therites.
Ther. Thou should'st strike him.
Aia. Coblofe.
Ther. He would pun thee into shiuers with his fist, as
a Sailor breakes a bisket. *Ther.* Do, do.
Aia. You horson Curre.
Aia. Thou stoole for a Witch.
Ther. I, do, do, thou sodden-witted Lord: thou hast
no more braine then I haue in mine elbows: An Asinico
may tutor thee. Thou scuruy valiant Assle, thou art heere
but to thresh *Troyans*, and thou art bought and sold a-
mong those of any wit, like a Barbarian slaue. If thou vlt
to beat me, I wil begin at thy heele, and tel what thou art
by inches, thou thing of no bowels thou,
Aia. You dogge.
Ther. You scuruy Lord.
Aia. You Curre.
Ther. *Mars* his Ideot: do rudenes, do Camell, do, do,
Enter Achilles and Patroclus.
Achil. Why how now *Ajax*? wherefore do you this?
How now Therites? what's the matter man?
Ther. You see him there, do you?
Achil. I, what's the matter.
Ther. Nay looke vpon him.
Achil. So I do: what's the matter?

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Ther. Nay but regard him well.
Achil. Well, why I do so.
Ther. But yet you looke not well vpon him: for who
some euer you take him to be, he is *Ajax*.
Achil. I know that foole.
Ther. I, but that foole knowes not himselfe.
Aia. Therefore I beate thee.
Ther. Lo, lo, lo, lo, what modicum of wit he writes: his
craunions haue cares thus long. I haue bobbd his Braine
more then he has beate my bones: I will buy nine Spar-
rowes for a peny, and his *Piamator* is not worth the ninth
part of a Sparrow. This Lord (*Achilles*) *Ajax* who wears
his wit in his belly, and his guttes in his head, Ile tell you
what I say of him.
Achil. What?
Ther. I say this *Ajax* —
Achil. Nay good *Ajax*.
Ther. Has not so much wit.
Achil. Nay, I must hold you.
Ther. As will stop the eye of *Helen's* Needle, for whom
he comes to fight.
Achil. Peace foole.
Ther. I would haue peace and quietnes, but the foole
will not: he there, that he, looke you there.
Aia. O thou damn'd Curre, I shal —
Achil. Will you let your wit to a Fooles.
Ther. No I warrant you, for a fooles will shame it.
Pat. Good words Therites.
Achil. What's the quarrell?
Aia. I had thee vile Owle, goe learne me the tenure
of the Proclamation, and he rayles vpon me.
Ther. I serue thee not.
Aia. Well, go too, go too.
Ther. I serue heere voluntary.
Achil. Your last seruice was sufferance, 'twas not vo-
luntary, no man is beaten voluntary: *Ajax* was heere the
voluntary, and you as vnder an Impresse.
Ther. E'ne to, a great deale of your wit too lies in your
sinewes, or else there be Liars. *Hector* shall haue a great
catch, if he knocke out either of your braines, he were as
good cracke a fustie nut with no kernell.
Achil. What with me to Therites?
Ther. There's *Vlysses*, and old *Nestor*, whose Wit was
mouldy ere their Grandfathers had nails on their toes, yoke
you like draft-Oxen, and make you plough vp the warre.
Achil. What? what?
Ther. Yes good sooth, to *Achilles* to *Ajax*, to —
Aia. I shal cut out your tongues.
Ther. 'Tis no matter, I shal speake as much as thou
afterwards.
Pat. No more words Therites.
Ther. I will hold my peate when *Achilles* Brooch bids
me, shall I?
Achil. There's for you *Patroclus*.
Ther. I wil see you hang'd like Clotpoles ere I come
any more to your Tents; I will keepe where there is wit
stirring, and leaue the faction of fooles. *Exit.*
Pat. A good riddance.
Achil. Marry this Sir is proclaim'd throughal our host,
That *Hector* by the fist houre of the Sunne,
Will with a Trumper, twixt our Tents and *Troy*
To morrow morning call some Knight to Armes,
That hath a stomacke, and such a one that dare
Maintaine I know not what: 'tis trash. Farewell.
Aia. Farewell: who shall answer him?
Achil. I know not, 'tis put to Lottry: otherwise

Heknew his man.
Aia. O meaning you, I wil go learne more of it. *Exit.*
Enter Priamus, Hector, Troilus, Paris and Helenus.
Pri. After so many houres, liues, speeches spent,
Thus once againe sayes *Nestor* from the Greekes,
Deliuere *Helen*, and all damage else
(As honour, losse of time, trauaile, expence,
Wounds, friends, and what els deere that is consum'd
In hot digestion of this comorant Warre.)
Shall be stroke off. *Hector*, what say you too'ta?
Hect. Though no man lesse feares the Greeks then I,
As farre as touches my particular: yet dread *Priamus*,
There is no Lady of more softer bowels,
More spungie, to sucke in the sence of feare,
More ready to cry out, who knowes what followes
Then *Hector* is: the wound of peace is surety,
Surety secure: but modest Deube is cal'd
The Beacon of the wife: the tent that searches
To'th' bottome of the worst. Let *Helen* go,
Since the first sword was drawne about this question,
Euery tye the soule 'mongst many thousand dismes,
Hath bin as deere as *Helen*: I meane of ours:
If we haue lost to many tenths of ours
To guard a thing not ours, nor worth to vs
(Had it our name) the valew of one ten;
What merit's in that reason which denies
The yeelding of her vp.
Troy. Fie, fie, my Brother;
Weigh you the worth and honour of a King
(So great as our dread Father) in a Scale
Of common Ounces? Wil you with Counters summe
The past proportion of his infinite,
And buckle in a waste most fathomlesse,
With spannes and inches so diminutiue,
As feares and reasons? Fie for godly shame?
Hect. No marvel though you bite so sharp at reasons,
You are so empty of them, should not our Father
Beare the great sway of his affayres with reasons,
Because your speech hath none that tels him so.
Troy. You are for dreames & slumbers brother Priest
You furre your gloues with reason: here are your reasons
You know an enemy intends you harme,
You know, a sword imploy'd is perillous,
And reason flies the obiect of all harme.
Who maruels then when *Helenus* beholds
A Grecian and his sword, if he do set
The very wings of reason to his heeles:
Or like a Starre disorb'd. Nay, if we talke of Reason,
And flye like chidden *Mercurie* from Ioue,
Let's shut our gates and sleepe: Manhood and Honor
Should haue hard hearts, wold they but far their thoughts
With this cramm'd reason: reason and respect,
Makes Liuers pale, and lustyhood deiect.
Hect. Brother, she is not worth
What she doth cost the holding.
Troy. What's aught, but as 'tis valew'd?
Hect. But value dwels not in particular will,
It holds his estimate and dignitie
As well, wherein 'tis precious of it selfe,
As in the prizer: 'Tis made Idolatrie,
To make the seruice greater then the God,
And the will dotes that is inclineable
To what infectiouslly it selfe affects,
Without some image of th'affected merit.
Troy. I take to day a Wife, and my election
Is led on in the conduct of my Will;